

Getting out of jail: suicide, escapes and releases in late medieval Bologna.

The history of late-medieval medieval prisons has undergone a welcome and overdue revision in recent years. Of primary importance has been the work of Guy Geltner who stressed, first, that incarceration was used punitively and not just for holding suspects pre-trial, and, second, that prisons were not 'earthly hells' where prisoners froze, starved and suffered, but places with tolerable conditions, where prisoners accepted confinement because of its relative safety compared to the threat of worse outside. Deaths were 'uncommon' and escapes 'surprisingly rare'.¹ Building on the idea of prisons as punitive institutions, Patricia Turning has focused on the crucial role of jailers in 'shaping the judicial atmosphere' and 'legitimizing notions of justice',² while in a complementary way Megan Cassidy-Welch has shown how a prison could function as a symbol of injustice and a trigger for protestations of innocence.³ The theme of the care of prisoners has been examined both by studies of confraternities that 'comforted' prisoners about to be executed,⁴ and by studies of sources such as wills and petitions that give access to prisoners' voices.⁵ In taking up once again the fate of prisoners in one Italian city, the object here is to open up a new discussion, on the effect of interrogation and torture on deaths in custody and on prison escapes, in order to accommodate new evidence of those phenomena. Suicide and death in custody feature only minimally in the recent historiography of medieval incarceration. At the same time, escapes have been downplayed. For Small, using prison registers from Arras between 1327 and 1348, the main ways out of jail were bail, liberation on account of poverty, banishment and death (by natural causes or, more commonly, by execution), while escape was rare, as the location of the prison in the castle made it too secure.⁶ She does not mention suicide or extra-judicial killing. Geltner has a similar list: amnesty (or feast-day releases), parole/termination of sentence, escape/breakout, and

(rarely) death, pointing to the infrequent escapes made or attempted at Venice (13 between 1316 and 1393), Florence (7 between 1299 and 1344) and Arras. Evidence from other cities, presented below, suggests that some cities saw higher, or much higher, rates of escape. In addition, the view that suicide, particularly prison suicide, is not present in Italian judicial sources and was not penalised in Italy will be shown to be untenable.

Bologna's rich and extensive judicial and governmental archive contains various types of record of the activities of its criminal courts and the management of its prisons. The court was presided over by the podestà, his criminal judge, and the Capitano del popolo, always foreign professionals on short-term contracts (usually a semester). The court generated four main series of records (trial registers, journals, sentences, documentary repository), of which the main source used here are the trial registers, which sequentially document each phase in a trial, from initial denunciation, through citation and responses, to sentence.

These are occasionally supplemented by the registers of sentences, and the court notaries' 'journals' (*vacchettini*) containing witness testimony and interrogations. The prisons were divided into the jails of the podestà and Capitano, run by their own staff, and the communal prisons, run by elected 'guardians' (*custodes*). All these officials were appointed, paid and supervised by the civic government, which for much of the period consisted of a combination, often conflictual, of the representative of the city's papal overlord (legate or governor) and the civic councils of the XVI and the Anziani (Elders), within a political evolution of shifting balance between external-papal and internal-oligarchical and –signorial politics, and the growing dominance of one family, the Bentivoglio.⁷

Previous authors have identified the location of the prisons in Bologna. Looking back from sixteenth-century evidence, Terpstra saw just two secular prisons: the communal prison in the Palazzo del podestà, and the Torrione prison at the corner of the Palazzo comunale.⁸

The prisons of the podestà and the Capitano del popolo were located within their

residences or palaces in what is now an isolated block on the north side of the Piazza maggiore. That block contained the *Palatium vetus*, the first palace of the Bolognese commune, built in the early thirteenth century.⁹ A prison-space (cell or ward?) called 'la vigna' is mentioned in 1398 as being 'under the vaults of the old Palazzo comunale'; it was also mentioned in the statutes, along with the tower and 'any filthy place', as unsuitable for those detained for minor crimes or smaller debts.¹⁰ Next to the Vineyard was a cell called 'the Oven', with a fearful reputation: when one warder threatened to transfer two female prisoners from the women's section to 'the prison called the Oven', they implored him not to do this, 'out of love of god ... because they were afraid of dying'.¹¹ According to Guidicini, a nineteenth-century local historian, who used government financial records, these old prisons were sold off in 1441 and new prisons built nearby.¹² The Torrione prison was a new construction in 1352 in the tower at what is now the north-west corner of the Palazzo comunale, enlarged by the papal governor in the 1360s; this prison was extended in the sixteenth century to include rooms for women and the sick. By that date also, it was apparently used for prisoners sentenced to death.¹³ The tower was originally a detached building, separated from the Palazzo of the Anziani by a garden.¹⁴ There was in addition a prison in the Palazzo of the Anziani: the description of an escape made in 1395 is very clear about the physical proximity of the prison to the audience chamber of the Anziani. Modern works on this Palace do not mention a prison here, but Geltner discovered the documents relating to its construction in the 1320s.¹⁵

The scale and function of incarceration can be gauged from the few surviving prison registers in Bologna, scarce remnants of what must have been much more extensive bureaucratic paperwork.¹⁶ A register of admissions and releases for the twelve months between December 1438 and November 1439 shows a total of nearly 350 people spending periods in prison in that time.¹⁷ This rate of turnover suggests that the Bolognese prison

was less densely occupied than prisons in Siena (249 in six months in 1395) or Florence (400-600 per semester in the later fourteenth century).¹⁸ The nature of the document makes clear the function of the prison as part of the state's debt-collection system. Over a third of prisoners were jailed at the request of the communal 'Collector' (*Exactor*), and others by officials such as the 'Revenue Protectors' (*Difensori dell'avere*), the Pass Office (*Ufficio delle bollette*) and the Waterways Office (*Ufficio delle Acque*), as well as the tax-farmers (*dazieri*) who collected indirect taxes. Private debtors were also detained, following legal action, by the podestà or his judges. The vast majority of prisoners were men, with only a handful of women – eleven, maybe twelve – who were mainly Germans, Jews or slaves, detained by the podestà, the Pass Office or the Plague Office (*Ufficio del Morbo*), so presumably mostly for offences not debts. Nearly a quarter of prisoners were released on the same day, presumably having found sureties for their debts, and half were released within three days, two-thirds within a week.¹⁹ Of the rest, thirty prisoners stayed between a fortnight and a month, and eleven between one month and four months. The average length of stay was six and a half days. There were rarely periods when there were fewer than six prisoners in the cells, and numbers could rise to twenty. This seems to represent a considerable change from the early fourteenth century, when average prison terms lasted for months.²⁰ Already by 1377-8 such long terms seem exceptional, a result of institutional oversight: in March 1378 a group of prisoners, consigned to prison for brawling in August and October the previous year, but still not sentenced, petitioned the Anziani for their cases to be expedited, which they promptly were. These included a man from Trent who stated that he was dying of hunger, thirst and cold, and the prison warders testified that this poor man, with his 'few, torn clothes', had been 'terribly afflicted by the cold' over the winter, and they 'did not know how he could be poorer'.²¹

Like this man from Trent, the vast majority of prisoners in 1438-9 were non-citizens and foreigners: almost half came from the *contado*, and another quarter from other parts of Italy, and from northern Europe, mainly Germany. Those held in prison for crimes were a minority: all of those consigned by the Capitano del popolo (26) and the *bargello* (1), and probably those consigned without any indication of debt by the Podestà (28), about one sixth of the total. Few of this group were released the same day, the mode being two days and the average over nine days.²² Also, few of this group were held pending corporal or capital punishment: Giovanni from Picardy was beheaded in April, and a *contadino* in October; Antonio from Athens was whipped and branded and had his ears cut off in July; Guglielmo d'Asti was hanged in September; and two German men, one *contadino*, and an Italian woman were whipped.²³ This stands in contrast to parts of France where prison does seem more routinely to have constituted a stage towards punishment,²⁴ while also confirming the small role that physical punishment played in the penal economy in later medieval Italy.²⁵

The register includes as well expenditure on prison maintenance (nails, locks and keys), and reference to two occasions when the prisons were 'broken' and prisoners were released: once in January, 'when Battista Canetoli came' (a reference to his armed occupation of the Piazza in a political confrontation with Annibale Bentivoglio), and again in September 'when that army came into the piazza' (another military occupation?).²⁶ Some evidence of the continuing limited capacity of the prison to cope with wounds and ill-health occur in the notes on three prisoners: a servant of patrician Francesco Ghisilieri's, detained for debt, was released after two weeks, because he was 'deathly ill'; a Fleming ordered to prison 'under good guard' by the podestà, was transferred within days to the Ospedale della Morte, 'because he was wounded'; and another man incarcerated by the podestà was released after a fortnight, with the note 'he paid nothing because he was mad'.²⁷ As in the previous

century, the Bolognese prison 'had no medical facility'.²⁸ Finally the register provides a trace of the continuing practice of mercifully releasing ('offering') selected prisoners to the city's patron saints at ceremonies on their feast-days, as confirmed by other documents, but recently discounted.²⁹

This picture, as regards the social profile of prisoners, is confirmed in a prison account book, for the six months December 1426 to May 1427.³⁰ This lists the 275 prisoners detained by the podestà and his staff (i.e. excluding debtors). This group were overwhelmingly male (only eight women, four of them prostitutes), largely consisting (where specified) of foreigners and *contadini*, and of artisans and manual labourers (butchers, gardeners, barbers, smiths, bakers, pimps, servants, dyers, street-cleaners, cooks, farriers, etc), with only very occasional members of the elite.

So the various prison spaces would have been the temporary holders of a constant traffic of debtors, suspicious travellers and criminals, most of them peasants or foreigners, most of them held for short periods, and few of them held in isolation. At the same time, these fifteenth-century registers also suggest a much less intensively-gearred prison system compared to the early fourteenth century: a list of those released from the 'new' and 'old' prisons for the first half of 1343 alone totals nearly 900.³¹ At some point in the later fourteenth or early fifteenth century, presumably as an adjustment to post-plague population levels, the Bolognese communal jail changed its business model: from high turnover and low fee (2 *soldi*) to lower turnover and high fee (6 *soldi*).³²

Deaths in custody: suicide or homicide?

According to the leading historian of medieval suicide, 'from surviving Italian civic criminal archives no scholar has so far brought to public attention any direct reference to completed

suicide for the medieval period. Nor do the indications available at present promise that anyone will.³³ What follows will not only present such evidence, but also discuss its credibility.

In June 1473, a Jewish man from Ferrara, Enoch son of Salamone, was interrogated about a death in the communal prison in Bologna.³⁴ Enoch was being held there on suspicion of counterfeiting coins, and, despite a conversion to Christianity, was later to be executed, but for now he was helping an enquiry conducted by the secretary to the papal governor of Bologna. This is what he said. He was being held in a part of the prison called 'the Vineyard' ('la Vinea'), while Giangiacomo da Montecchio, one of his suspected accomplices in crime, was held in 'the Oven' ('el Forno').³⁵ Access to the Oven was through the Vineyard. On the evening of 12 June ('around 20 hours'), he saw Giangiacomo drinking some water brought to him by one of the servants of the chief judge (podestà), who left, closing the door. After an hour, one of the podestà's notaries came and spoke to Giangiacomo, interrogating him about another member of the gang, a painter called Antonio, but without entering the room. The notary then left, locking the Oven door. No one else entered, as Enoch would have seen them, until early that night ('1½ hours') when another member of the podestà's staff, Ser Barnaba, brought dinner for the prisoners. He unlocked the door to the Oven and called to Giangiacomo. When he did not hear a reply, he lit a torch, expressing his surprise that Giangiacomo had not answered: 'There'll be a holiday if he were ever to die (*Vedera festa si custui fosse mai morto*)'. Barnaba fetched another member of the podestà's staff and together they entered the Oven, where they found Giangiacomo 'sitting and hanged by his belt to a bolt on the door of the prison, hanged and dead'. The notary, Pietro Paolo da Fano, who recorded Enoch's testimony, helpfully drew the scene

(Insert Illustration here).

But whom was this notary helping in his striking portrayal of a scene of death? Was his drawing based on his own sight of the body, or only on Enoch's description? Could the death have occurred as Enoch described it? The plight of Jews held in municipal prisons could increase the pressures on them to convert: could it also lead to cooperation in the cover-up of a death in custody? Presenting murder as suicide was not unknown in Renaissance Bologna.³⁶ If we assume that the door in the drawing and in Enoch's account was the only door into the Oven, then it is difficult to see how this suicide could have happened. First, the bolt and lock are depicted on the inside of the cell-door; and secondly, the body would have obstructed the opening of the door. The only way that Enoch's version can be credited is if there were a second door in the Oven, leading to other passages or chambers, but why would this door have a bolt and lock on the inside? Moreover, the actions of the podestà's staff arouse suspicion. Why did Ser Barnaba fetch a colleague (as if he knew he needed a witness)? And what does his remark suggest about his attitude to Giangiacomo's death? There would certainly have been people interested in silencing Giangiacomo: he had been arrested on the 10th, and had at once started spilling details about the counterfeiting gang (names and addresses, precise roles), even without torture, and this despite, on his own admission, having sworn an oath with his accomplices not to disclose anything.³⁷ The next day, 11th, the podestà had ordered the arrest of five other members of the gang, and Giangiacomo had been questioned again, this time under torture. More arrests, including Enoch's, followed.

If this were a suicide, however, it would conform in several respects to prison suicides in the modern and contemporary worlds, for which studies have found hanging to be the most common method by far, and night to be the most common time, and have identified numerous precipitating factors such as the initial days of incarceration (as in this case), solitary confinement (as apparently also in this case) and visits from outside (likewise).³⁸ In

contrast to modern Western societies, where risks of suicide in prison are high and completed suicides are proportionately far higher than in the general population,³⁹ in medieval Europe they seem to be minimal and are rarely discussed by historians. Minois hardly discusses them.⁴⁰ Pugh's study of prisons in medieval England did not mention them, asking rather 'How were prisoners kept alive?', though Dunbabin, relying on a case from thirteenth-century France described by Murray, asserted that some at least of the 'frequent deaths recorded in prison' were 'clearly' due to suicide.⁴¹ By contrast, among the few deaths in Venetian and Florentine prisons, Geltner found 'no indication that any of these incidents were the result of suicide', though he did point to Felix Fabri's inclusion in his (possibly imaginary) description of the prisons in Venice of a Jewish debtor who had hanged himself.⁴² Schmitt listed only two cases of completed suicide in prison in his survey of later-medieval French evidence,⁴³ and Spierenburg found very few cases in early modern Germany and the Netherlands, in fact only one completed suicide (Lübeck, 1701) and four attempts (Hamburg, 1699, Delft, 1800).⁴⁴

The case of Giangiacomo da Montecchio therefore raises many questions about both suicide and deaths in custody in late medieval Italy. Enoch's testimony and the notary's drawing are exceptional documents in several respects: as an investigation into a death in custody; and as a (purported) depiction of an actual, as opposed to a classical, biblical or allegorical suicide;⁴⁵ but not in fact as a judicial document of suicide. For the extraordinary richness of the judicial archive in Bologna provides examples of other suicide attempts in the city's prisons. In 1405, Giannino da Milano was charged with attempting to kill himself while detained in the podestà's palace because of some 'likely evidence' (*indicia verisimilia*) of thieving: 'not wearied by disease, pain or infirmity, but only out of diabolical desperation' (the wording is formulaic),⁴⁶ he had in the middle of the night found a small length of rope and hanged himself, remaining suspended until he was half-dead, at which point other prisoners 'heard

him and helped him'. He confessed and as a penalty he was condemned to remain in the prison for one year as the executioner (*manigoldo*).⁴⁷ If we are to believe this indictment, Giannino managed to find a length of rope in a dark cell and to hang himself without rousing any of his fellow-prisoners. The same year, a man detained on suspicion of harbouring a convicted criminal, was prosecuted for wounding himself in the chest with a knife (self-harm? attempted suicide? victimisation?) and was fined 25 *lire*.⁴⁸ In the Bolognese jail in 1440, a man held on three charges of theft took another prisoner's belt, 'with the intention of killing himself by hanging', and hanged himself from a barred window, but the belt broke and he fell to the ground, being found half-dead by other prisoners.⁴⁹ What is significant is that all these instances of suicide and its attempt were by suspects under investigation, not convicts: it was either the investigative process that created suicidal situations, or the introduction of new inmates into a cell that led to homicides, presented as suicide.

Not all of these cases consistently record a penalty, and it has been claimed that Italian courts did not prosecute or penalise suicide because it was not defined as a crime.⁵⁰ This is belied by judicial records in another city, Mantua, which do contain penalties imposed on (non-prison) suicides. One was imposed on a man who hanged himself 'because of his worthlessness' in 1459: ('let his memory be damned, and half of his goods confiscated, the other half assigned to his heirs, as according to the statutes'),⁵¹ the other on a man who drowned himself in a ditch (half his property was confiscated too).⁵² Florentine judicial records also contain the occasional punishment of attempted suicide.⁵³ However, two other Bolognese cases, of suicide outside the confines of the prison, present a less clear judicial response. In June 1383, the local official at the Bolognese village of Tizzano denounced Guidotto Cattanei for killing his wife, with one great slash of his knife to her neck and throat. The court messenger went to summon Guidotto, but reported that he had heard 'from many people of the village that Guidotto, after committing this homicide,

had died and is in the river Reno in which, it is said, he drowned himself, and his body, dead and drowned, it is said, has been found in the river'. Witnesses attested to the discovery and identification of the body, its carriage back to the village, and its burial at the church, 'though not in sacred ground'.⁵⁴ There is no suggestion of further penalty. Forty years earlier, Brandelasio, a Bolognese citizen, having been involved in a brawl with two other men, confessed that, impotent to avenge an injury, he had in despair attempted to kill himself with his own sword, blaspheming as he did so, 'Devil take me'. The imputation of despair, and the alleged self-surrender to the devil fit the pattern of medieval conceptions of suicide.⁵⁵ A few weeks later his father raised objections to the prosecution, including that 'those things ascribed to Brandelasio that he did on his own body do not fall into any type of crime, as they did not cause any damage or shame to anyone else but only to himself'.⁵⁶ This argument seems to have been accepted as no penalty is recorded.

Judicial sources are not alone in recording deaths in custody. As Murray acknowledged, the nineteenth-century historian of Milan, Emilio Motta found non-judicial sources for two self-hangings in Milanese prisons, one completed (1488) and one attempted (1469).⁵⁷ Murray, however, seriously understates the quantity of such reports in Italian chronicles. Among chronicles to record deaths in custody are those of Ferrara, Siena, Forlì and Bologna. In Ferrara in 1487, a man imprisoned for robbery, after his accomplice was executed, 'hanged himself ... in prison', 'it is said'; and as a punitive result, his corpse was exposed.⁵⁸ In the same decade, a prisoner who had fabricated false coins hanged himself with a sheet, and a former friar, now a soldier and suspected of theft and homicide, 'died in prison because of the many tortures he sustained'.⁵⁹ In Siena in 1423 a 'poor man' was arrested on suspicion of wounding a baby; he was tortured and promised to confess, but later that night was found hanged by his belt, 'and people believed that he died on the rope since the Executor had his body carried to Vitecio [the crime scene] and hanged there by the neck at 23 hours

[of night]'.⁶⁰ Another Sienese chronicle narrates an event in 1484: a man arrested on suspicion of political subversion and about to be tortured, was excused to go the toilet ('che voleva andare al necessario a fare suo agio'), and on his return (presumably taking advantage of a temporary relaxation of oversight), he threw himself from the window, falling into the cortile; and he died a few hours later.⁶¹ At Forlì in 1427, a convicted sodomite, due to be burned to death the next day, was reported to have died in prison overnight.⁶² In the same city, earlier in the same year, a friar, before confessing to attempting to poison the papal governor, threw himself out of a window (attempted suicide or attempted escape?), and, after confessing, was found one morning to have hanged himself with a cloth from a pole.⁶³ Suspicion of carceral killing was soon voiced in this case: his killers, according to the chronicler, gave the governor to understand that he had killed himself, and they had him buried 'in the [castle] ditch, to support the idea that he had hanged himself'.⁶⁴ Similar suspicions might arise in the case of a convicted perjurer in Mantua, sentenced in 1491 to amputation of a hand, who 'tried to commit suicide by banging his head against a wall and ... lost much blood', according to the podestà, or in the case in the same city in 1477 of a confessed murderer who died some days after being tortured, the vice-podestà claiming that he died because he had refused to eat.⁶⁵ Sometimes chroniclers make direct allegations of homicide against judges: Raimondo Tolomei da Siena, as podestà of Bologna in 1364, was said to have committed 'greater villainies than any official ever' in that city, including killing a man in torture ('sul tondolo').⁶⁶ More sympathetic to the police authorities was a Sienese chronicler, who reported in 1383 that a shoemaker arrested by the police-chief (*bargello*) for theft and tortured, died on the rope, 'without having been given too much pain', and one of the city councils decided that the *bargello* should not be removed from office.⁶⁷ Most of these deaths occurred during investigations, not after conviction. The distinction is important: it was the investigative process, and especially the use of torture, that drove the

rate of deaths in custody. Evidence from chronicles thus supports the evidence from trial records that deaths in custody – in or after torture, by the prisoner's own hand or that of others – were a part of the experience of late medieval prisons in Italy.

If cases of alleged suicide were to be taken as evidence of concealed homicide, what do they reveal about how cover-ups could be managed? Public opinion and public report, as presented by chroniclers with their 'it is said' and 'people believed', suggest a concern for inmates' fate and a willingness to believe that deaths in custody occurred because of excessive use of the rope-hoist. In Perugia, one fifteenth-century jurist recounts, the incoming podestà only just survived a popular riot because of his reputation for almost killing suspects in the torture room.⁶⁸ Against such a background, judicial and police authorities had difficulty in disseminating credible narratives: they promptly got the ear of the political authorities, and burial in unconsecrated ground did give some credence to the appearance of suicide, but rapid disposal of the body, by a nocturnal hanging or burial, only aroused suspicion. To return to the case of Giangiacomo: if his death were homicide, it was well-disguised and raised no suspicions among contemporaries; if it were suicide, it followed a pattern (method, timing), had a clear motivation (isolation from colleagues whom he had just betrayed) and an immediate trigger (renewed questioning about an accomplice). Incarceration and interrogation had left Giangiacomo with no other way out. Other prisoners had more opportunity.

Prison escapes

Some city prisons had few escapes, others were consistently insecure. From the Florentine Stinche – a free-standing, purpose-built prison compound, in Geltner's description; appearing as 'an island completely separated from the town', in Manikowska's – escapes were rare save in exceptional moments (the floods of 1333, the Ciompi uprising of 1378, etc).⁶⁹ By contrast, in mid-fifteenth-century Mantua, they were a regular occurrence: in the

years 1455-60 alone, there were a total of twenty-four successful escapes, by ninety-two prisoners, as well as three 'conspiracies' to break out, involving over thirty men.⁷⁰ One of the several Milanese prisons was noted at the time to be insecure.⁷¹ Bologna, with thirteen successful escapes between 1354 and 1399, and several attempts (see below), would seem to be less secure than Venice, but more secure than Mantua.

Spierenburg discussed only three methods of escape in early modern prisons: breaking out, getting hold of the keys, and arson.⁷² He judged arson to be ineffective because 'usually discovered by the smoke', while he appreciatively judged the 'inventiveness' of prisoners in making tools, lifting stones, digging, procuring files from outside, and profiting from staff negligence. These methods appear among Bolognese escapes, but are also joined by others.

Getting hold of the keys appears in only one case in Bologna, and in that case it was reportedly very easy. In April 1392, two prisoners were in the prison 'below the Podestà's palace', one a debtor, the other detained 'at the request of his father and his father-in-law, because of Giacobba da Venezia, a prostitute, whom he had taken from the brothel in Venice and brought to Bologna and was keeping as his servant against their wishes' – an example of prison being used to enforce the wills of fathers on their families.⁷³ One of these prisoners had obtained a copy of the key to the chest in which the prison supervisor kept his keys: they simply opened the chest, took the keys, unlocked the doors and left. On the other hand, as Spierenburg found, the use of fire to escape seems to have had a high failure rate. Two men attempted this method in 1463, successfully burning a first set of doors, but being discovered when they set light to a second.⁷⁴ Two women, one held for adultery, the other for theft, used considerable ingenuity in gaining access to the prison door and in setting fire to it: they used an existing short ladder, extending it with poles secured with strips of cloth from their headgear, and then used lard to accelerate the fire; they made it through this door, but were caught trying to exit the main prison gate.⁷⁵

Staff negligence is a more prominent theme. In April 1357 the three warders at the time were held responsible for the flight of the nobleman Paganino da Panico, detained at the request of the then lord of the city, Giovanni d'Oleggio, for crimes against the state; but the case was cancelled on their petition, as the lord, at a time of strategic clemency towards all offenders, recognised their lack of funds ('impossibilitate') and Paganino's 'slight' offence.⁷⁶ Seven debtors in 1385 fled from the prison in the palace of the Anziani due to the 'fault and negligence' of the prison supervisor, who was prosecuted.⁷⁷ In an unusual instance later that decade, the notary to the criminal court was charged with assisting and profiting from the escape of Andreuccia di Onofrio da Firenze: according to the indictment, she promised him a silk robe, decorated with silver, 'if you act so that I can leave and if you help me'; he left the door open so that she could escape. He later claimed to have confessed out of fear of torture and the Anziani cancelled the prosecution.⁷⁸ Two of the prison warders in December 1397, on their own authority released an 'infamous' thief and robber from Reggio and fled the city with him. They were banned with a penalty of hanging (which would have been his penalty).⁷⁹ In 1399 the four warders for October 1398 were charged with negligence following the escape from 'la Vigna' of a group of eight men, led by a nobleman, Alamanno degli Obizzi da Lucca, five of them detained by the Army Pay Office ('officium conducte stipendiariorum') and one serving a year's sentence of imprisonment for a wounding. At the end of a long trial lasting over two months, in which the defendants hired one of the most indefatigable of contemporary attorneys, Stefano Ghisilardi, the warders were sentenced to a fine only for the escape of the violent criminal.⁸⁰ In 1400 one of the prison warders was charged with negligence in the escape of three men, a Florentine, a baker and a heavily indebted Bolognese merchant, and the sentence transferred their debts to him.⁸¹ In these cases, various levels of negligence are visible, including collusion, facilitating escape and acting for personal gain

Female prisoners found other ways out of jail: befriending and bribing the guards, and exiting by doors left open, not through holes made in windows or walls. Their prison experience was different from men's.⁸² In 1413, the podestà had consigned to prison, 'for common utility', a dangerous prostitute, Ursolina da Vienna, who was said to be corrupting the young men of the city, diverting them from their trades while extorting gifts ('commoda'); but one of the prison warders in November took her out of the prison and did not bring her back (the warder confessed but was excused penalty).⁸³ A Bolognese widow was convicted of having sex with one of the guards in the women's prison, and of using him as an intermediary in her attempt to bribe the judge to release her.⁸⁴ Also acquitted, on account of her poverty, was Caterina, a baker's daughter who had been prosecuted for bigamy and imprisoned, but escaped: at first she tried to put the guard to sleep by giving him some 'opium', and when this failed to work she persuaded him to go out for some wine, and as he had left the door open she absconded, but was rearrested very quickly.⁸⁵ Running errands for prisoners has been identified as part of a culture of staff-inmate collusion in medieval prisons.⁸⁶

Men's escapes mostly took different forms from women's: they used force, tools and whatever materials were to hand. In 1354, eighteen men, some of them local, others from Bergamo, Treviso, Parma and Florence, and held variously for debt, previous jail-break, theft, wounding, attempted rape and homicide, escaped from the 'old prison': they took some poles from the walls and went to a barred window (*fenestram ferratam*) and with the poles levered two of the bars from the window making a hole through which they climbed onto a roof terrace (*solario*), where they broke through another window, and then descended using a rope which they hung from the window bars.⁸⁷ In 1379, a Bolognese citizen, Andrea di Giuliano, was held with his feet in stocks in the podestà's palace in connection with a large theft from a bank, but one night he managed to pull his feet out and

flee. He subsequently argued in a petition to the government that he did this 'out of fear of the podestà, who had had him tortured many and many times, and cruelly (*acriter*)'.⁸⁸ A *contadino*, held for information on a homicide in 1386, used a bread knife to make a deep hole in the door around the lock, but was detected by the guards.⁸⁹ The following year, Piero da Vicenza was being held with another man in the prison of the Capitano del popolo, 'chained and shackled', and he broke both chains and shackles, freed his cell-companion, and they began to weaken the iron bars at the window with some wood, when they were discovered by the Capitano's constable roused by the noise.⁹⁰ In June 1395, two prisoners 'in the prison of the vaults, under the vaults of the Palazzo of the Anziani', one held for debt, and one for failure to fulfil some contracted public works, detached the catch from the door, thus gaining access to an audience chamber, then came to the door of the residence of the Anziani and detached the locks with tools, and so fled.⁹¹ In March 1398, a student, a shoemaker, a Sicilian and one other prisoner, held in 'the Oven', used chisels and other tools to make a large hole in the roof terrace ('in solario seu balcho') and escaped through the hole.⁹² The warders were prosecuted for negligence in not searching the prisoners for tools.⁹³ On one occasion, when the podestà's staff brought food and opened the door, one of the prisoners rushed him, pushed him to the floor and the prisoners fled.⁹⁴ In September 1425 a thief from nearby Faenza was being held in the prison in the Palazzo comunale; he broke through the wall and then made his way out of the Palazzo.⁹⁵ The guards also heard and recaptured a vagabond, Bandino d'Arezzo, when he used a wooden pole to break out of his cell, and an iron tool to open a door and to break the wall leading to the piazza.⁹⁶ A man who used an iron key to remove mortar from the wall around the door hinges, in order to escape, was also discovered and confessed,⁹⁷ while three men, detained in the podestà's palace for sodomy and poisoning, started to loosen stones in the floor, 'where the

prison was weaker', using wood from a bench, but stopped when joined by another prisoner, a suspect rapist, whom they did not trust.⁹⁸

Friends and family helped organise escapes from outside: In 1418, Niccolò dal Verde spoke to a prisoner at the window, encouraging him to be of good heart, as the patrician Valerio Poeti was organising that he be 'offered' (released) at Easter, 'and if this doesn't happen, there will be other remedies, because this regime cannot last' and suggesting that there would be disorder because of shortages and prices – and therefore implying that prisoners could either escape during disorder or profit from an amnesty from a new government.⁹⁹ In the same year, Antonio, 'the bastard', of Castelfranco, instructed his wife and daughter to damage the lock on the outer door of the prison in Castelfranco so that he could escape: at night they used a small sickle (*falcinello*) to lift the nails holding the lock, and opened the door for him.¹⁰⁰ In February 1430 a group of eleven men, including Tommaso and Cristoforo Canetoli, broke the communal gaol and released the prisoners.¹⁰¹ In these circumstances, assisting a prisoner to get out of jail could become a resource: 1426 two brothers secured the release from jail of Bartolomeo Roti, who had been arrested for carrying an illegal weapon. In return Bartolomeo promised that he would kill the wife of one of his deliverers, and a few days later he stabbed her to death, his release from prison being the price of his hire as an assassin.¹⁰²

More escapes occurred than are recorded in the incomplete series of trial records. Other record-series point to them. For example, in 1424, Sante Lugaresi da Lugo petitioned for cancellation of his capital ban, imposed after his escape three years previously: he was innocent, he maintained, and had been tortured illegally and was afraid of 'unjust death'.¹⁰³ Also, in June 1457 the podestà was authorised by the government to proceed against the prison warders for negligence in letting some prisoners flee.¹⁰⁴

These accounts of escape show that prisons were stocked with materials and equipment suitable either for escape or suicide, such as ladders, poles and rope (evidence either for a low perceived risk of escape or for poor management of the space), while prisoners also had access to useful commodities such as lard or 'opium', as well as their own clothing. If suicide attempts were as impulsive in the medieval period as they seem in the modern,¹⁰⁵ the means were readily to hand. These accounts also illustrate a number of key themes: the threat of torture as an incentive to escape; the greater number of escapes from the jails (more perhaps holding-cells?) of the podestà, the Capitano, and the Anziani, than from the communal prisons; the successful recapture of some escapers; the differences between men's and women's methods of escape; the pattern of government response to escapes, starting with severity and softening into terminated prosecutions and cancelled penalties. Clear among the impulses to flight was fear of torture, and it is significant that the Anziani intervened in 1380 to regulate its use: the podestà wanted to use it more often, and the Anziani, while censuring its indiscriminate use, loosened the restrictions by removing protections for certain categories of suspect.¹⁰⁶ The government could also intervene to license unrestricted torture in specific cases, as in 1477 when the podestà was authorised to repeat the torture of an arrested 'thief, robber and killer', 'as many times as seems necessary'.¹⁰⁷ Formal objections in court to the use of torture seem to become more common from the later fourteenth century, along with graphic descriptions of its physical effects.¹⁰⁸ The judicial, rather than legal, history of torture in Bologna, indeed Italy too, is yet to be written, but in other cities its use increased in the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

This paper has brought new life to a subject that was declared dead: the practice and penalisation of suicide, especially in prisons, in late-medieval Italy. It has shown that suicide was a not uncommon topic in chronicles, and that there is as much evidence of prison

suicide in one city in fifteenth-century Italy as in whole countries in later medieval and early modern Europe. It has combined this evidence with that for escapes from prison in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, placing this in the context of recent studies of medieval prisons, and suggesting a new interpretation in which prison escapes were not rare in every city, and could vary from prison to prison within a single city. It also places deaths in custody and escapes in relation to the use and fear of torture: in contrast to a Parisian prison register, which records no death and hardly any torture.¹¹⁰ By making the rarity of escapes part of an argument for the tolerability of prisons in the later Middle Ages, Geltner overlooked an aspect of prison life that generated fear and flight: imprisonment not for custodial or punitive purposes, but for investigative reasons. It was this phase that produced suicides, attempted suicides and many of the recorded escapes. This has implications for the revisionist interpretation of prison conditions: if reported suicides and suicide attempts were real, then some prisoners were reduced to desperation by their experiences; alternatively, if they were inventions to conceal homicide, they import greater aggressivity into the relations among inmates or between inmates and staff. If escapes were more common from some prisons than others, the question opens whether it was security or tolerability that varied.

¹ G. Geltner, *The Medieval Prison: A Social History* (Princeton, 2008), pp. 74-7, 80; idem, 'Coping in medieval prisons', *Continuity and Change*, 23 (2008), 151-72; G. Geltner, 'Isola non isolata: Le Stinche in the Middle Ages', *Annali di storia di Firenze*, 3 (2005), 7-28. For punitive incarceration, see also E.M. Peters, 'Prison before the prison: the ancient and medieval worlds', in *The Oxford History of the Prison*, ed. N. Morris and D.J. Rothman (New York, 1998); T. Dean, *Crime in Medieval Europe* (London, 2001), pp. 120-1.

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- ² P. Turning, 'Entrusted with the key: jailers, warders and guards at the end of the Middle Ages', in *Réalités, images, écritures de la prison au Moyen Age*, ed. J-M. Fritz and S. Menegaldi (Dijon, 2012), pp. 211-12.
- ³ M. Cassidy Welch, 'Testimonies from a fourteenth-century prison: rumour, evidence and truth in the Midi', *French History*, 16 (2002).
- ⁴ *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy*, ed. N. Terpstra (Kirkville, 2008).
- ⁵ *La religione dei prigionieri*, ed. M.C. Rossi (Verona, 2015).
- ⁶ C.M. Small, 'Prisoners in the Castellany of Artois in the early fourteenth century', *Histoire sociale*, 26 (1993), 362-6.
- ⁷ A. De Benedictis, 'Lo "stato popolare di libertà": pratica di governo e cultura di governo (1376-1506)', in *Storia di Bologna: Bologna nel Medioevo*, ed. O. Capitani (Bologna, 2007), 899-950.
- ⁸ N. Terpstra, 'Confraternal prison charity and political consolidation in sixteenth-century Bologna', *Journal of Modern History*, 66 (1994), 218-20.
- ⁹ P. Foschi, 'I Palazzi del Podestà, di Re Enzo e del Capitano del Popolo: problemi e proposte di interpretazione', *il Carrobbio*, 24 (1998), 13-42.
- ¹⁰ *Gli statuti del Comune di Bologna degli anni 1352, 1357, 1376, 1389*, ed. V. Braidi (Bologna, 2002), p. 200.
- ¹¹ *Inquisitiones*, 203, reg. 5, fols. 66-8 (9 Sept. 1366); Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, p. 65.
- ¹² G.B. Guidicini, *Cose notabili della città di Bologna* (5 vols., Bologna, 1868-73), IV, p. 412.
- This statement is difficult to verify in the surviving records of the *Difensori dell'avere*, where however it was 'unam mansionem ex carceribus ... vocatam lo Cagnudo' and other 'mansiones ... sub palatiis domini potestatis' that were leased out, the latter for rebuilding, in 1437: reg. 40, fols. 121, 122v.

¹³ Terpstra, 'Confraternal prison charity', pp. 219-20.

¹⁴ F. Bergonzoni, 'Note sul restauro dei prospetti del Palazzo comunale di Bologna', *Strenna storica bolognese*, 19 (1969), 22-4, 26.

¹⁵ Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 23 and 140 n. 89. Guidicini did mention this prison, but said it was removed the following year: *Cose notabili della città di Bologna*, IV, pp. 349, 411.

¹⁶ On the two types of prison documentation, 'traffic logs' and account books: Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 35-6. Other registers exist for the years 1407 and 1426-7.

¹⁷ Comune, Soprastante alle prigionie.

¹⁸ Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 40, 75.

¹⁹ Very similar figures at Arras: Small, 'Prisoners in the Castellany of Artois', p. 353. On the evidence of fragmentary documentation covering six days in 1412, the Parisian Châtelet released over four-fifths of its prisoners within a week: C. Gauvard, M. Rouse, R. Rouse, and A. Soman, 'Le Châtelet de Paris au début du XVe siècle d'après les fragments d'un registre d'écrou de 1412', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 157 (1999), 576.

²⁰ Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 58-9.

²¹ Inquisitiones, 229, reg. 3, fol. 76. For the other cases: reg. 5, fols. 39, 45.

²² As at Arras: Small, 'Prisoners in the Castellany of Artois', p. 353.

²³ Comune, Soprastante alle prigionie, 21 April, 10 July, 18 July, 2 Sept., 27 Sept., 4 Oct., 16 Oct., 15 Nov.

²⁴ M. Vincent-Cassy, 'Prison et châtement à la fin du Moyen Age', in *Les marginaux et les exclus dans l'histoire* (Paris, 1979), p. 265; L. Mathieu, 'Prison et prisonniers en Anjou au bas Moyen Age', *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'ouest*, 112 (2005), 150, 158.

²⁵ Dean, *Crime in Medieval Europe*, pp. 129-30; G. Geltner, *Flogging Others: Corporal Punishment and Cultural Identity from Antiquity to the Present* (Amsterdam, 2014), pp. 62-3.

²⁶ Comune, Soprastante alle prigioni, reg. for 1439, 3 Dec. ('relasado perche le prexune fune rote quando Batista da Chanedolo vene') and 27 May ('relasado perche fu roto le prexune quando vene in piazza quella armada'). For the episode in January: *Corpus chronicorum bononiensium*, vol. 4, p. 93.

²⁷ Comune, Soprastante alle prigioni, reg. for 1439, 20 March, 14 April, 27 May.

²⁸ Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, p. 66.

²⁹ Comune, Soprastante alle prigioni, reg. for 1439, 18 May, Andrea da Polonia was 'aprexentado a San Piero'. Cf. J. Koenig, 'Prisoner offerings, patron saints and state cults at Siena and other Italian cities from 1250 to 1550', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 108 (2001), 247, who 'found little evidence of the prisoner offering at Bologna in the fifteenth century'. The evidence exists in several series, e.g. Comune, Governo, 296, Libri mandatarum, reg. 11, fols. 44, 89v (1451-2); 319, Riformagioni e provvigioni, Serie miscellanea, 9 Aug. 1447, 24 Dec. 1449; 337, Atti degli Anziani, reg. 2 (24 Dec. 1473).

³⁰ Curia del podestà, Vacchettini, busta 4

³¹ Comune, Governo, 273, reg. 1.

³² Curia del podestà, Vacchettini, busta 4. Cf. Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 38-9.

³³ A. Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998-2000), I, p. 236.

³⁴ Archivio di Stato. Bologna, Curia del podestà, Vacchettini, busta 10, register for Nov. 1472-Oct. 1473. All further archival references are to this archive, unless otherwise stated.

³⁵ For the Oven: Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, p. 65. I see it not, however, as a torture chamber, but rather as a particularly secure room, where for example Giovanni I Bentivoglio, briefly lord of Bologna, was held on being deposed in 1402 (Capitano del popolo, Giudici, 851, fol. 20). Prisons called 'forni' or close to rooms containing ovens are found elsewhere in medieval Italy (Monza, Gioia del Colle). Cells and wards tended to have evocative names: Geltner, *Medieval Prisons*.

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- ³⁶ Curia del podestà, *Inquisitiones*, 166, reg. 4, fols. 2, 29. Cf. L. Frati, 'La morte di Lorenzo de' Medici e il suicidio di Pier Leoni', *Archivio storico italiano*, 5th ser., 4 (1889), 266-60.
- ³⁷ Podestà, Vacchettini, 10, second reg. for Nov. 1472-Oct. 1473, fols. 72v-5v.
- ³⁸ D. Crighton, 'Suicide in prisons: a critique of UK research', in *Suicide in Prisons*, ed. G. Towl, L. Snow and M. McHugh (Leicester, 2000), pp. 31-2, 39, 42; L.M. Hayes, *Prison Suicides: An Overview and Guide to Prevention* (US Department of Justice, 1995), pp. 3-4.
- ³⁹ Crighton, 'Suicide in prisons', pp. 27, 30; Hayes, *Prison Suicides*, pp. 1-4.
- ⁴⁰ G. Minois, *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture* (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 11-12.
- ⁴¹ R.B. Pugh, *Imprisonment in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 315-32, p. 315 for the quotation; J. Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 123.
- ⁴² Geltner, *Medieval Prison*, pp. 72, 75, 97.
- ⁴³ J.-C. Schmitt, 'Le suicide au Moyen Age', *Annales Economies Sociétés Civilisations*, 31 (1976), 22.
- ⁴⁴ P. Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience: Disciplinary Institutions and their Inmates in Early Modern Europe* (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 192, 199.
- ⁴⁵ F. Cutter, *Art and the Wish to Die* (Chicago, 1983), pp. 105-14; R.M. Brown, *The Art of Suicide* (London, 2001), pp. 49-83.
- ⁴⁶ A. Pertile, *Storia del diritto italiano* (6 vols, Turin, 1896-1903), V, p. 505.
- ⁴⁷ *Inquisitiones*, 286, reg. 4, fol. 117 (15 Apr. 1405).
- ⁴⁸ *Inquisitiones*, 287, reg. 1, fol. 70.
- ⁴⁹ *Inquisitiones*, 346, reg. 1, fol. 76 (10 July 1440).
- ⁵⁰ Murray, *Suicide*, p. 237. The nineteenth-century legal historian, Pertile, though drawing on early-modern rather than medieval sources, had already pointed out that suicide was

penalised in Italy, though generally with hanging and denial of Christian burial, rather than confiscation: Pertile, *Storia del diritto italiano*, V, pp. 504-6. See also R. Marra, *Suicidio, diritto e anomia: immagini della morte volontaria nella civiltà occidentale* (Naples, 1987), pp. 76-81.

⁵¹ Archivio di Stato, Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 3453, 17 March 1459. Another man was also prosecuted that year for attempted suicide by hanging, but was absolved as the case was 'not proven': 6 Oct. 1459.

⁵² D.S. Chambers and T. Dean, *Clean Hands and Rough justice: An Investigating Magistrate in Renaissance Italy* (Ann Arbor, 1997), p. 72.

⁵³ U. Dorini, *Il diritto penale e la delinquenza in Firenze nel sec. XIV* (Lucca, n.d.), p. 135.

⁵⁴ *Inquisitiones*, 244, 1 June 1383.

⁵⁵ Schmitt, 'Le suicide au Moyen Age', p. 4; W. Paravicini, 'Un suicide à la cour de Bourgogne: Roland Pippe', *Revue du Nord*, 91 (2009).

⁵⁶ *Inquisitiones*, 158, reg. 5, fols. 31-40 (Feb. 1343).

⁵⁷ Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, I, pp. 239-40.

⁵⁸ Girolamo Ferrarini, *Memoriale estense*, ed. P. Griguolo (Rovigo, 2006), p. 264; Bernardino Zambotti, *Diario ferrarese dall'anno 1476 sino al 1504*, ed. G. Pardi, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 2nd series, vol. 24, pt 7 (Bologna, 1934-7), pp. 183-4.

⁵⁹ Zambotti, *Diario*, pp. 79, 209-10.

⁶⁰ *Cronache senesi*, ed. A. Lisini and F. Iacometti, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 2nd edn, vol. 15, pt 6 (Bologna, 1931-), p. 800.

⁶¹ M. Burdisso, "'Di noi senesi e dele nostre gesta': analisi e riscontri di autenticità di una inedita cronaca senese anonima di fine '400 – inizio '500 pervenuta in copia tarda', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 115 (2008), 450.

⁶² Burdisso, "'Di noi senesi'", p. 176.

⁶³ Giovanni di Maestro Pedrino depintore, *Cronica del suo tempo*, ed. G. Borghesio and M. Vattasso, 2 vols. (Rome, 1929-34), vol. I, p. 161.

⁶⁴ Giovanni di Maestro Pedrino, *Cronica*, p. 231: 'per fare più credere lue fosse inpicadose sis-stesso'.

⁶⁵ Chambers and Dean, *Clean Hands and Rough justice*, pp. 117, 241.

⁶⁶ *Corpus chronicorum bononiensium*, ed. A. Sorbelli, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 2nd series, vol. 18, pt I (Città di Castello and Bologna, 1906-40), vol. 3, p. 195.

⁶⁷ *Cronache senesi*, p. 699.

⁶⁸ *Tractatus de indiciis et tortura D. Francisci Bruni de S. Severino ... D. Guidonis de Suzaria ... et D. Baldi de Periglis ... cum additionibus D. Ludovici Bolognini* (Venice, 1549), p. 41.

⁶⁹ H. Manikowska, 'The Florentine communal prison – le Stinche – in the fourteenth century', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 71 (1995), 135, 153; Geltner, 'Isola non isolata', p. 12; Geltner, 'Coping in medieval prisons', p. 164.

⁷⁰ Archivio di Stato, Mantua, Archivio Gonzaga, buste 2452-3, Mar. and July 1455, Feb., Mar., Nov. and Dec. 1456, Feb., June and Dec. 1457, Feb., Aug., Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1458, Feb., Mar. and Apr. 1459, Feb., May, June, July, Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1460; Chambers and Dean, *Clean Hands and Rough justice*, pp. 66, 68, 76-7.

⁷¹ M. Gazzini, "'Humanum est peccare, evangelicum emendare et diabolicum perseverare': suppliche di prigionieri nel carcere milanese della Malastalla', in *La religione dei prigionieri*, pp. 224-5.

⁷² Spierenburg, *Prison Experience*, pp. 207-9.

⁷³ *Inquisitiones*, 262, reg. I, fol. 12 (9 May 1392). For evidence of this elsewhere: Manikowska, 'Florentine communal prison', p. 136; Geltner, 'Isola non isolata', pp. 19-20; Gazzini, "'Humanum est peccare'", p. 216.

⁷⁴ Carte di corredo, busta 299, 12 Sept. 1463.

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- ⁷⁵ Inquisitiones, 254, fol. 163 (25 Jan. 1389).
- ⁷⁶ Inquisitiones, 185, reg. 1, fol. 43 (10 May 1357). For the strategic clemency, manifested in amnesties: L. Sighinolfi, *La signoria di Giovanni da Oleggio in Bologna (1355-1360)* (Bologna 1905), pp. 182, 195-6.
- ⁷⁷ Inquisitiones, 246, reg. 2, fols. 161-3.
- ⁷⁸ Capitano del popolo, 835, fols. 6-9 (20 Aug. 1388).
- ⁷⁹ Inquisitiones, 273, reg. 4 (30 Dec. 1397).
- ⁸⁰ Inquisitiones, 275, reg. 1, fols. 34-70 (11 Feb. 1399). For examples of Ghisilardi's long career as a defence attorney: Inquisitiones, 242, reg. 3, fol. 139 (1383); 312, reg. 1, fol. 62 (1420).
- ⁸¹ Inquisitiones, 279, reg. 3, fol. 4 (9 Dec. 1400).
- ⁸² G. Geltner, 'A cell of their own: the incarceration of women in late medieval Italy', *Signs*, 39 (2013), 27-51 (does not deal with escapes).
- ⁸³ Inquisitiones, 301, reg. 1, fols. 150-2 (17 Nov. 1413).
- ⁸⁴ Sententiae, busta 37 (4 Mar. 1423).
- ⁸⁵ Inquisitiones, 353, reg. 1, fols. 32-4, 48-9 (9 and 23 Jan. 1448). For another example of successful re-arrest, of an alleged sodomite: Vacchettini, 4, 8 and 22 Dec. Cf. Spierenburg, *Prison Experience*, p. 211, who found early-modern courts inactive in tracing escapers.
- ⁸⁶ Geltner, 'Isola non isolata', pp. 20-1.
- ⁸⁷ Inquisitiones, 178, reg. 2, fols. 2-7 (25 May 1354).
- ⁸⁸ Comune, Governo, 286, Riformaggioni e provvigioni cartacee, reg. 42, fol. 29v. He had been sentenced to death for the escape: Inquisitiones, 234, reg. 4, fol. 41.
- ⁸⁹ Inquisitiones, 249, reg. 1, fol. 157 (7 Sept. 1386).
- ⁹⁰ Capitano del popolo, 829, fol. 67 (27 Mar. 1387).
- ⁹¹ Inquisitiones, 268, reg. 2, fol. 38 (8 June 1395).

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- ⁹² Inquisitiones, 273, reg. 3, fol. 86 (22 April 1398).
- ⁹³ Inquisitiones, 273, reg. 4, fol. 72 (27 April 1398). For regulations on daily searches at Venice: E. Bacchetti, 'La gestione del sistema carcerario a Venezia e il regolamento del doge Antonio Venier (1391)', *Atti dell'Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, 155 (1996-7), 318-19.
- ⁹⁴ Inquisitiones, 305, reg. 2, fol. 151 (28 Nov. 1416).
- ⁹⁵ Inquisitiones, 323, reg. 2, fol. 91 (25 Oct. 1425).
- ⁹⁶ Inquisitiones, 304, reg. 3, fol. 136 (13 May 1416).
- ⁹⁷ Vacchettini, 5, reg. for July-Oct. 1456, 6 Sept.
- ⁹⁸ Capitano del popolo, Giudici, 864, fols. 228-9 (Aug. 1423).
- ⁹⁹ Inquisitiones, 308, reg. 1, fol. 42: 'Antonio, io so venuto a vigitarte. Sta de bona voglia, perche Valerio di Poeti procura de farte oferire in questa pasqua. Et non posendo questo avere luogo, ce seranno gli altri remedii. Peroche questo stato non po durare per che i pover uomini de questa cita se lamentano de la carestia et dele spese che ce sono ...'
- ¹⁰⁰ Inquisitiones, 308, reg. 1, fol. 81 (8 June 1418).
- ¹⁰¹ Inquisitiones, 330, reg. 1, fols. 56-9.
- ¹⁰² Inquisitiones, 325, fol. 57 (22 Nov. 1426).
- ¹⁰³ Camera degli atti, busta 36, 18 Feb. 1424.
- ¹⁰⁴ Libri partitorum, reg. 2, fol. 28.
- ¹⁰⁵ D. Lester, 'Suicide and opportunity: implications for the rationality of suicide', in *The Reasoning Criminologist: Essays in honour of Ronald V. Clarke*, ed. N. Tilley and G. Farrell (London, 2012), pp. 166-7.
- ¹⁰⁶ Comune, Governo, 286, Riformaggioni e provvigioni, reg. 42, fols. 57-v (15 June 1380); S.R. Blanshei, 'Aristocratization of late medieval-early modern Bolognese government and society', in *Lo sguardo lungimirante delle capitali: saggi in onore di Francesca Bocchi*, ed. R. Smurra, H. Houben and M. Ghizzoni (Rome, 2014), pp. 239-41.

¹⁰⁷ Comune, Governo, 326, Riformaggioni e provvigioni, serie miscellanea, busta 13, 14 July 1477.

¹⁰⁸ Inquisitiones, busta 271, reg. 4, fol. 39 (1397); T. Dean, *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 189-90.

¹⁰⁹ L. Stokes, 'Experiments in pain: reason and the development of judicial torture', in *Ideas and Cultural Margins in Early Modern Germany*, ed. M.E. Plummer and R.B. Barnes (Farnham, 2009).

¹¹⁰ Gauvard, Rouse, Soman, 'Le Châtelet de Paris', pp. 578-9.